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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/763,961	01/23/2004	Jens Beger	HOE-593.1	7911
20028	7590	06/26/2006		
Lipsitz & McAllister, LLC 755 MAIN STREET MONROE, CT 06468			EXAMINER RAMANA, ANURADHA	
			ART UNIT 3733	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 06/26/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/763,961	Applicant(s) BEGER ET AL.	
	Examiner Anu Ramana	Art Unit 3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 March 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5, 6 and 9-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 5, 6, 9-16, 18 and 19 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 17, 20-26, 28 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 27 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 January 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 17, 20-25 and 28-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Eckhof et al. (US 5,902,303).

Eckhof et al. disclose a bearing ring or “clamping element” 6 having a cylindrical passage or “screw hole” 12 wherein steps or “snap catches” engage a groove on a top portion of a screw head 19 when a cannulated or “hollow” bone screw 1 is inserted through screw hole 12 (Figs. 1 and 4, col. 3, lines 58-67 and col. 4, lines 1-60).

The method steps of claims 17, 20-25 and 28-29 including: providing a clamping element having at least two snap catches and spaced around an edge of a screw hole; providing a bone screw having a circumferential groove located below the screw head; positioning the clamping element on a bone segment to be stabilized; and screwing the bone screw into bone through the screw hole of the clamping element in an axial direction until the snap catches interlock with the groove of the bone screw are performed when the Eckhof et al. device is assembled by driving a bone screw through a clamping element 6 placed in a bone plate 3.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eckhof et al. (US 5,902,303), as applied to claim 17, further in view of Bray (US 6,235,034).

Eckhof et al. disclose all elements of the claimed invention except for a targeting instrument for placement of screw 1.

It is well known to place a bone screw guide device or targeting instrument on a plate for placing bone screws in the plate, as evidenced by Bray (Figs. 9 and 10 and col. 6, lines 46-63).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided a targeting instrument, as taught by Bray, for placement of screws in the plate of the Eckhof et al. assembly since it was well known in the art to utilize a targeting instrument for placement of a bone screw.

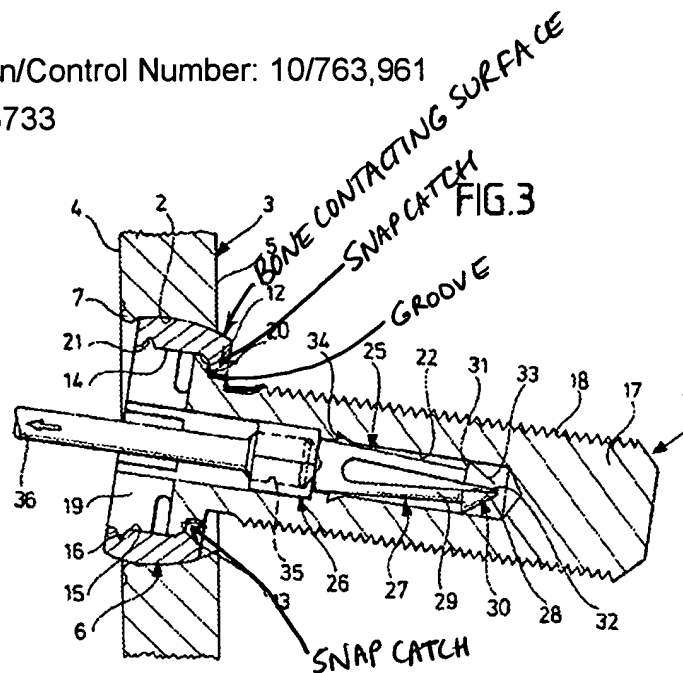
The method steps of claim 26 are performed when a targeting instrument is utilized to place a bone screw 1, as taught by Bray, in a bone plate 3 as disclosed by Eckhof et al.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments submitted under "REMARKS" in the response filed on March 31, 2006 have been considered but are not persuasive for the following reasons.

Applicants' arguments that the Eckhof et al. clamping element 6 is not used to stabilize bone segments are not persuasive since the transitional phrase "comprising" does not preclude the presence of other elements such as a bone plate. Applicants' claim directed to a method for locking a bone screw to a clamping element is clearly met by Eckhof et al.

Applicants' further argue that the Eckhof et al. clamping element 6 does not have snap catches protruding from a bone contacting surface. This is not found to be persuasive as shown in marked up Figure 3 on the following page.



Further, snap catches of clamping element 6 engage a circumferential groove or "furrow" below the screw head as shown in marked up Figure 3 above.

Eckhof et al. also disclose placement of the bone screw through the clamping element 16 wherein engagement of "snap catches" 20 in a groove below the screw head limits the insertion depth of the screw.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5-6, 9-16 and 18-19 are allowed.

Claim 27 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anu Ramana whose telephone number is (571) 272-4718. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached at (571) 272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

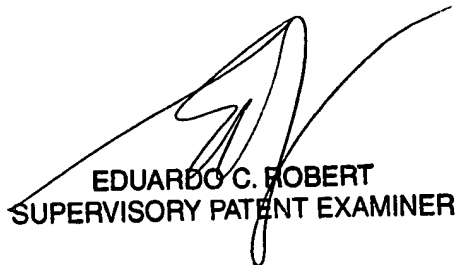
Art Unit: 3733

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AR

June 19, 2006

Amuratha Ramana


EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER